

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:  
a network interface element configured to receive an inbound packet at a line rate; and  
a control element, wherein  
said control element is coupled to said network interface element,  
said control element is configured to determine a packet priority associated with  
said inbound packet substantially at said line rate,  
said control element comprises  
a first buffer configured to store said inbound packet, and  
an inbound queue manager configured to store at least a portion of said  
inbound packet using a second buffer, and  
said second buffer is substantially larger than said first buffer.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said control  
element comprises:  
a control element configured to perform rate limiting on a plurality of packets including  
said inbound packet substantially at said line rate.
4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said inbound  
queue manager comprises a buffer usage manager.
5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said control  
element comprises:  
a control element configured to determine a class of service associated with said inbound  
packet.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein  
said inbound packet comprises a header and a tail; and  
said control element further comprises:

an inbound receiver comprising said first buffer;  
a lookup circuit coupled to said inbound receiver and configured to compare said header to a data structure and to determine routing information; and  
a first packet modifier circuit configured to modify said header according to at least said routing information to form a modified packet;

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said inbound queue manager comprises:

an inbound queue manager coupled to said first packet modifier circuit and configured to store said modified packet using said second buffer.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said data structure comprises an M-way branching tree structure.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said control element further comprises:

an outbound receiver comprising a third buffer configured to store an outbound packet substantially at said line rate;

a second packet modifier circuit configured to modify said outbound packet substantially at said line rate; and

an outbound queue manager coupled to said second packet modifier circuit and configured to store said outbound packet using a fourth buffer, wherein said fourth buffer is substantially larger than said third buffer.

10. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

storing an inbound packet using a network interface, wherein

said storing comprises storing an inbound packet using a first buffer of said network interface;

determining a packet priority associated with said inbound packet substantially at a line rate of said network interface; and

storing at least a portion of said inbound packet using a second buffer of said network interface in response to said determining, wherein

said second buffer is substantially larger than said first buffer.

11.-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising:  
performing rate limiting on a plurality of packets including said inbound packet  
substantially at said line rate of said network interface.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said determining  
comprises:  
determining a class of service associated with said inbound packet.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein  
said inbound packet comprises a header and a tail; and  
said method further comprises:  
comparing said header to a data structure substantially at said line rate of said  
network interface;  
determining routing information substantially at said line rate of said network  
interface; and  
modifying said header according to at least said routing information to form a  
modified packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said comparing comprises:  
comparing said header to an M-way branching tree structure.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said storing at least a portion of  
said inbound packet using a second buffer of said network interface in response to said  
determining comprises:  
storing said modified packet using said second buffer.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said storing said modified packet  
using said second buffer comprises:

managing buffer usage.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising:  
storing an outbound packet using a third buffer of said network interface;  
modifying said outbound packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface;  
and  
storing said outbound packet using a fourth buffer of said network interface in response  
to said modifying, wherein  
said fourth buffer is substantially larger than said third buffer.

20. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium having a  
plurality of instructions executable by a computer embodied therein, wherein said  
plurality of instructions when executed cause said computer to perform a method  
comprising:  
storing an inbound packet using a network interface, wherein  
said storing comprises storing an inbound packet using a first buffer of said  
network interface;  
determining a packet priority associated with said inbound packet substantially at a line  
rate of said network interface; and  
storing at least a portion of said inbound packet using a second buffer of said network  
interface in response to said determining, wherein  
said second buffer is substantially larger than said first buffer.

21.-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim  
20, said method further comprising:  
performing rate limiting on a plurality of packets including said inbound packet  
substantially at said line rate of said network interface.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim  
20, wherein said determining comprises:

determining a class of service associated with said inbound packet.

25. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 24, wherein

said inbound packet comprises a header and a tail; and

said method further comprises:

comparing said header to a data structure substantially at said line rate of said network interface;

determining routing information substantially at said line rate of said network interface; and

modifying said header according to at least said routing information to form a modified packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, said method further comprising:

storing an outbound packet using a third buffer of said network interface;

modifying said outbound packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface; and

storing said outbound packet using a fourth buffer of said network interface in response to said modifying, wherein

said fourth buffer is substantially larger than said third buffer.

27. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:

means for storing an inbound packet using a network interface, wherein

said means for storing comprises means for storing an inbound packet using a first buffer of said network interface;

means for determining a packet priority associated with said inbound packet substantially at a line rate of said network interface; and

means for storing at least a portion of said inbound packet using a second buffer of said network interface, wherein

said second buffer is substantially larger than said first buffer.

28.-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable-medium~~ apparatus of claim 27, further comprising:

means for performing rate limiting on a plurality of packets including said inbound packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface.

31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein said means for determining comprises:

means for determining a class of service associated with said inbound packet.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein said inbound packet comprises a header and a tail; and  
said apparatus further comprises:

means for comparing said header to a data structure substantially at said line rate of said network interface;

means for determining routing information substantially at said line rate of said network interface; and

means for modifying said header according to at least said routing information to form a modified packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, further comprising:  
means for storing an outbound packet using a third buffer of said network interface;  
means for modifying said outbound packet substantially at said line rate of said network interface; and  
means for storing said outbound packet using a fourth buffer of said network interface in response to said modifying, wherein  
said fourth buffer is substantially larger than said third buffer.